trains and the Railways can ear,more. If there is a proposal, by which time, would this scheme be launched?

My second supplementary is: By which time, will computerised reservation system be operational in all the stations in the country?

SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL: Sir, he has put a specific question about the computerisation of reservation system. In this year's Railway Budget itself, we have made it clear that this year is being treated as "Passengers' Amenities Year". We have decided to provide computerised reservation system at as many stations as possible. We have given a long list of names. Over and above, we are thinking in terms of providing computerised reservation system in every district headquarters in the country, even where there is no railway. We are thinking in terms of introducing computerised reservation system this Year, not only for reservation, but also for unreserved tickets.

Indo-French co-operation in education

*643. SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH:
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:†

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether India and France have decided to increase co-operation in the area of education;

(b) if so, what are the agreements reached between the two countries in this regard; and

(c) whether any programme of action has been undertaken by both the countries in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT [DR. (SHRIMATI) RITA VERMA] : (a) to (c) The Indo French Cultural Exchange Programme (CEP) 2000—2002 was signed in New Delhi on 10th March, 2000 during the 13th Session of the Joint Indo-French Commission for Cooperation in the field of Science, Education and Culture. It is being implemented by the concerned organisations.

† Question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Dr. T. Subbarami Reddy.

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY: Sir, considering the background of my question, the answer given by the hon. Minister is absolutely unsatisfactory, vague and touch-me-not. The question is whether India and France have decided to increase co-operation in the area of education and whether any agreements have been reached. The background behind this was, in 1988, when the Prime Minister of France came to India, our relations were strengthened very forcefully. Secondly, when the nuclear test took place, when countries like Japan and America condemned our nuclearisation, it was only France which said that, "India being a democratic country with great values, it must protect its sovereignty and it had a right to have that nuclear test". Recently, on 10th April, in Kolkata, French Ambassador has highlighted this relationship and said, "We are going to have more co-operation in the fields of economy, science and technology and education, and we will have agreements". But in the reply, there is nothing at all. It simply says, "Indo-French Cultural Exchange Programme was signed in New Delhi". So, I would like to know from the hon. Minister, with this background, whether three agreements between the IIT, Delhi, Bourdeaux University and the European Automation Laboratory have been signed by the concerned parties for the purpose of creating an Indo-French Laboratory for Information Technology. The second part of my question is whether any agreement was signed with the IIT, Delhi, to set up two professional chairs in the Tolouse Science University and IIT.

DR. (SHRIMATI) RITA VERMA: Sir, let me explain, at the very outset, that there is only one agreement signed between the Indian Government and the French Republic on cultural, scientific and technical co-operation. That agreement was signed way back in 1966. Under this agreement, cultural exchange programmes have been signed from time to time which are programmes for action for the period prescribed therein. The latest cultural exchange programme, 2000—2002 was signed in New Delhi on 5th March, 2002. The second part of his question was about the educational content. Shall I explain to him the educational content of that agreement? The following are the broad areas covering the educational content of that agreement—CEP, 2000-2002. First, co-operation in the field of human and social sciences; second, co-operation in the field of

university and higher education which encompasses the Cyber University which you were mentioning; third co-operation in the field of books and publication; and fourth, co-operation in the field of languages and education. Now the specific answer to your specific question is this. There is an agreement between the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore and the Tolouse University Network, France for setting up on Indo-French Cyber University. If you want the details, I can give those details. The agreements by the Indian Insitute of Technology, Delhi with the French institutes, are regarding: (a) to establish a programme of academic and scientific exchange and collaboration in areas of interest to both the institutes. Sir, I seek your indulgence because the answer is a bit longish. He wants these details and I am giving all the details; otherwise, he can write to me and I will give all the details to him.

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY: Sir, I feel very sorry. When there is such a good atmosphere between India and France, the Government's attitude is 'touch me not'. It is such a small agreement on a cultural programme. I want to know from the hon. Minister whether the Government is going to make more efforts to create a better relationship in the field of not only education but also in the field of economy and Science and technology. This is part (a) of my question. Sir, India and France have jointly launched a Cyber University to forge academic co-operation between the two countries. If so, I would like to know whether the French University of Education in November 1999 had made the area of Cyber University, which would provide technology-based learning environment, devoted to education. What concrete steps are being taken by both the countries in the field of education and to what extent France has agree to provide expertise in the field of science and technology and also in cultural and social activities? The Minister might not be able to give all the details. She can give these details in writing.

MR. CHAIRMAN: She will give the reply in writing; otherwise the reply will take a very long time.

DR. RAJA RAMANNA: Sir, I would like to bring to the notice of the hon. Minister the fact that probably the most successful collaboration between France and India in the fietd of education and

Science and technology has been the Indo-French agreements. It was done in a very special way in which persons of a very high standing in science were involved. From the Indian side, I was working to find out how effective the programme has been over the last few years. I thought the actual quality of work done in this cooperative way between France and India on science, Biology, Physics and Chemistry was the most important and exciting combination between the two countries and should act as an example for the rest of the countries. The idea of having occasional audit, as I call it, of how the work is progressing is something which is very good and it is available on CDs. The CDs on the quality of work at every place are exchanged between the two countries and this is a very effective way of keeping a check on the quality of work as well as on the money spent. I thought this would be of some interest to the Minister if it is not already known to her as it would be a very important introduction for the collaboration between the two countries.

DR. (SHRIMATI) RITA VERMA: Sir, as far as I could understand, I believe, the hon. Member wants to know whether we are re-evaluating the agreements. Sir, these agreements are signed after an interval of three years and before signing a new agreement, a re-evaluation is done. As regards the query about the French experience, it appears that they are quite satisfied with these agreements. I can tell you about the Indian side. We are having a number of agreements in the field of education, and they are going on very well. They have agreements with the IITs; they have agreements with the IIM, Ahmedabad; they have an agreement with the National Law School, Bangalore; and there is an MOU signed by a cyber network university of France with the IIT, Chennai. The agreements by the IITs with the French Institutes are to establish programmes of academic and scientific exchange and collaboration in the areas of interest to both the institutes; to establish collaboration in the field of research and education which encompasses the field of Biochemistry as well; to establish co-operation in any field of mutual interest, exchange of students and staff; and to establish collaboration in research and development as well as training of senior managers and engineers in the sector of water and wasteland management. Sir, these agreements are working satisfactorily; this is what I wanted to inform the House.

SHRI MOTILAL VORA: Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister how effectively the science and technology programmes are going on in our country. And, as far as Biochemistry is concerned, how far we have reached, considering the earlier situation where our universities and colleges were lagging behind in this field.

DR. (SHRIMATI) RITA VERMA: Sir, the latest cultural exchange programme was signed on 10th March, 2000; it is an evolving process. Sir, if the hon. Member sends me any specific enquiry, I will respond to it, to his satisfaction.

SHRI C.P. THIRUNAVUKKARASU: Recently, the Minister of Education of France, Mr. Allegre, visited India, and he met the Minister of Education, Dr. Murli Manohar Joshi. And, there was a plan in India to instal Laser Physics and Geo Physics. There was also an agreement between India and France. Sir, as far as Pondicherry is concerned, it is a French-dominated territory. French culture prevails there; more than 3,000 French people are living there. I would request that if at all the Government is thinking of having joint collaboration in the field of science and technology, they should kindly consider establishing it in Pondicherry.

DR. (SHRIMATI) RITA VERMA: Sir, there are agreements reached between the Universities of Pondicherry and the eight Universities of France in the fields of medicine, science, mathematics, computer science, physics, chemistry, law, human rights, history economics, life sciences, etc.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question Hour is over.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO STARRED QUESTIONS

Digital library for research scholars

†*644. SHRIMATI KUM KUM RAI: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) when, in what manner, and wherefrom the research scholars students can take advantage of conventional knowledge and digital library;

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† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.